DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 314 394 SP 031 845

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TITLE New/Returning Teachers: A Perspective of Their Induction Year Needs.
PUB DATE Nov 89
NOTE 15p.; Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the National Council of States on Inservice Education (14th, San Antonio, TX, November 17-21, 1989).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Beginning Teachers; Classroom Techniques; Elementary Secondary Education; Inservice Teacher Education; *Peer Relationship; *Reentry Workers; Student Needs; *Teacher Orientation; Teacher Student Relationship; *Theory Practice Relationship
IDENTIFIERS *Beginning Teacher Induction

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to provide data on teacher induction and to find ways in which a college/university may provide assistance to a school with teachers in their induction year. The study was conducted in three parochial schools that had requested a teacher induction program because of a large influx of new teachers. Descriptions are given of each of the schools and their unique problems and needs. Information was gathered through interviews with the teachers and observations of classrooms. Prime concerns in each school centered on special student needs, instructional needs, groupings, discipline, student placement, retention problems, and parental demands. The emerging induction program focused on three major points: (1) constructive dialogue between teachers and administrators, providing teachers with mutual support and reinforcement; (2) a broad based support system for new/returning teachers; and (3) workshops for new teachers centering on classroom management and discipline. Some recommendations are made concerning the need for teacher education programs to address the practical aspects of teaching as well as the theoretical aspects. (JD)

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New/Returning Teachers: A Perspective of Their Induction Year Needs

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PURPOSE

The two-fold purpose of this study is to provide data on teacher induction that may serve as a model for the future, and also yield ways in which a college/university may provide assistance to a school with teachers in their induction year.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The induction of new teachers into the profession has been a topic of discussion for many years; yet the induction phase has only recently begun to be the topic of several major research projects.

In the wake of the Holmes and Carnegie reports we find schools, colleges/universities, and state legislatures reevaluating teacher education programs. Griffin stated in the Journal of Teacher Education, 1985, that many studies had a tendency to describe only the problems and not center in on how teachers pass through this induction period. We actually have little information on how and what kind of help will directly affect and influence teachers passing through this induction period.

If new programs are to be successful one must consider various factors. The late Frances Fuller had a theory that teachers go through three stages before achieving mastery of craft at the fourth stage. She starts with the first stage as

preservice teachers begin their inroads into teaching - the "fantasy" stage. Those of us working with preservice teachers know this stage quite well. The novice is idealistic and sees black and white, with no in-between.

The second stage or "survival" stage is the induction year. Fantasy/idealism turns to reality and the new teacher struggles for his/her place in the overall education structure. It is this point that research is studying.

The third stage, according to Ryan, is the "survival" stage. This is the point that may occur around February as teachers begin to learn the art of teaching and view it as their chosen career. It is the last stage before becoming the accomplished teacher.

METHODOLOGY

Three parochial schools in Chicago were the sites for this field study. Because of an increase in new teachers, each school administrator requested a teacher induction program unique in design.

School X

School X was comprised of 520 Hispanic, Asian, and Caucasion students, a faculty of 20, and four new teachers. Since I had been working for several years with this school and was already preparing a general staff workshop, the interaction

with these four teachers posed little or no problem. The first interaction was basically used to ascertain their needs, address their problems and concerns, and provide them with organizational and management strategies.

My overall role at this school was advisor and adjunct to the principal and assistant as problems arose. It became one of impartial observer and liason producing observations and diagnostic reports as needed.

School Y

School Y was an all Black, inner city school comprised of 15 staff, 320 students, and 3 new teachers. In this particular school I was considered a chief player within the entire school and a staff consultant by all.

Before meeting with these new teachers the principal and I established areas and strategies for discussion. The new teachers were to regard me as a support system to the staff, and a mentor and link between their university and the first year.

The initial meeting of the Primary staff (two experienced/ three new) involved setting up the idea of team work and sharing among the teachers; developing procedures and guidelines for working with me; and establishing a positive classroom atmosphere.

My overall roles were that of support and mentor to the

teachers involved, and liason between the teachers and principal.

School Z

School Z was an all Black, inner city school comprised of 9 staff members, 258 students, and 4 new teachers. (This made half of the staff new to the school!)

I did not begin working with these teachers until the third month, because several had not been hired until after school began. The lateness of my interactions prompted me to ask them the same questions I did of School X. These results were important because I had to evaluate their needs and concerns immediately if I was to impact on their induction year.

Although my role at each school varied, my goal was to consider the individual needs and match the required assistance. Out of this I was striving to ascertain how, what, and why the strategies presented would help these new teachers take charge of their own growth and development as professionals in their induction year.

PROCEDURE

School X

My presence at this school was minimal. The mode of operation was usually advice or ideas solicited from the researcher and carried through by the administration. The needs

ranged from observation of teachers, classroom organization ideas, parental involvement issues, to curriculum concerns. Very little interaction occurred until the interview at the year's end.

School Y

The teacher support here was in evidence throughout the year. Group sessions were held on a bi-monthly basis and classroom visitations were conducted weekly or as needed/ requested by the teachers. Most visits ranged from 30 minutes per person, with some involving an entire morning/afternoon depending on the teachers' needs.

The ideas, comments, and needs obtained from these meetings were usually typed and returned to the teachers and principal. Additionally, individual meetings were held with the principal to ascertain any concerns and needs she perceived.

School Z

The teachers at this school had one joint meeting and, thereafter, I met with them individually. During the classroom visitations, which ranged from one hour to an entire morning/ afternoon, I observed, participated, and reacted to their needs and concerns. They were informed one week in advance of my visitation and they indicated their needs at that time.

The principal was given verbal and written feed-back after

each visit and this acted as the catalyst for interaction between the staff and her.

YEAR END INTERVIEW RESULTS

Each teacher was interviewed, using a tape recorder to record responses, thus placing a minimum of restraint on their answers. Ten questions were asked, involving about 45 minutes of interview time. The questions were:

1. What were the most rewarding aspects of your last year? Why?
2. What were the most frustrating aspects of your last year? Why?
3. Thinking back to your student teaching and clinical experiences, do you think they helped prepare you for teaching? If not, why not?
4. Do you feel your college education courses prepared you for teaching? How? If not, why not?
5. How do you think your college or university could have better prepared you for teaching?
6. In what ways did your principal, coworkers, or I help you?
7. How could your principal, staff, or I have better helped you?
8. What subject areas gave you the most problems? Why?
9. What subject areas gave you the least problems? Why?

10. How could we (administration/consultant) better help new teachers on this staff? What areas would you suggest?

On the basis of these questions we were able to gain insight into their needs and obtain a perception of the areas that helped them through their induction year. It was interesting to note that in all schools, the teachers indicated the students' responses as the most rewarding. The educational growth of their students confirmed the majority view that teaching was the right choice for them.

The second question dealing with their frustration dealt also with students. The difference here involved their handling of classroom management problems to managing disruptive students.

In School X they felt that special needs students were slipping through the cracks because there were no programs available.

In School Y instructional needs, groupings, and discipline were the prime concerns.

In School Z the problems went from student placement/ retention problems to control of parents. The needs and demands of the parents were overwhelming.

Questions three, four, and five dealt with areas addressed by the respective colleges and universities. The new teachers

felt these experiences were great but that there should be more field work with greater variety and opportunity to try their hand at planning and teaching.

The teachers stated that no matter how much preparation one has, nothing prepares them for the moment of truth - "when the class is yours, the door closes, and they're looking at you!"

The responses relative to what a university could/should provide ranged from nothing (because they were pleased) to a course titled Wonderful Ideas 101. The two specific areas that surfaced involved classroom planning/management and parent-teacher involvement.

Questions six and seven relative to ways the staff or I could help varied. School X teachers were satisfied with the support received on all fronts. Only one felt more observations and assistance was necessary.

School Y had few negatives. Their main concerns centered on better curricular understanding and more staff interaction. They felt the input from me was great and helped them know if they were on target. It was easier to share with the researcher because I wasn't evaluating them and it was ok if they didn't know everything. They didn't want to express lack of knowledge to an older colleague

At School Z the situation was altered. Each teacher felt

the principal gave confidence and support, but they would have liked more visitations. They felt a need for joint meetings on a regular basis, and visitations by me beginning on day one, not waiting until someone called requesting help. For them a support system was a priority.

Questions eight and nine dealt with subject areas giving problems. A summary of this may be found in Table One.

Question ten found all schools emphasizing an in-service during the first month. They felt an outside source is ideal because experienced teachers, although willing to help, are caught up in their own problems and needs at school's beginning.

They indicated a specific orientation not only to the general district policies, but the specific school's agenda as well. Things as minor as food/gum policies became major to the novice. Quite often there are unwritten policies and hidden agendas that a novice learns by accident.

They requested that specific meeting dates, a support system with others in their position, and routine in-class observations continue. The non-evaluative support received was invaluable.

RECOMMENDATIONS/IMPLICATIONS

This year-long study provided data for the researcher and

the principals. On the basis of this information one could see the development of an important communication triad - principal/teacher/consultant. The flow of information may be instituted by either partner and it could satisfy any needs. Constructive dialogue between the partners provides teachers with mutual support and reinforcement.

A second point involves development of a broad based support system for new/returning teachers. This provides a variety of contacts and gives opportunity for choice. Gehrke (1981) stated,

> Our support for beginning teacher programs must assure, therefore, that the building of helping communities within each school is given attention equal to, if not greater than, the development of large-scale technical assistance programs and training packages. Only with the encouragement of these communities, that are mindful of what we know about beginnings and helping, can we be sure that teachers, beginners and veterans alike, will be given a balance of the aid, the enabling help, and the affirmation they need. That is the kind of help that helping's all about. (p.112)

Third, workshops geared to the new/returning teacher should center on classroom management and discipline. Support measures

should be provided regularly to monitor concerns and needs.

Finally, teacher education programs should address the theoretical and practical. Methods courses should be reviewed for content and purpose; strategies necessary to implement these subjects may need clarification and restructuring; and field experiences should be reexamined for their purposes in the overall program.

The goal of this induction case study was to find ways a teacher educator could provide input for a successful program. The materials discussed, the activities conducted and the results gleaned, yielded a variety of recommendations for consideration. If teacher induction is to be successful, it must be reactive to the needs of the teachers it is serving and reflective of positive educational strategies.

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Table One

Comparison of Subject Area Concerns for New Teachers by School

School	Subject Areas							
	Rdg	Sci	SSt	LA	MAth	Spg	Pho	Rel
Xa	2	1						1
Ya	3				1			
Za					1	1	1	1
Xb	1	1		1	1			
Yb		1	1					
Zb	1	1	1		1			

Note. The abbreviated subject areas in order are as follows: Reading, Science, Social Studies, Language Arts, Mathematics, Spelling, Phonics, and Religion.

a Denotes subject mentioned as giving the most problems

b Denotes subject mentioned as giving the least problems